

The Jacob Merritt House  
Near Arney's Mount  
Springfield Township  
Burlington County, New Jersey

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Seymour Williams, F.A.I.A., District Officer  
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

The Jacob Merritt House  
Near Arney's Mount\*  
Springfield Township  
Burlington County, New Jersey

Owner and occupant: Mr. Benajah W. Paul

Dates of Erection: 1785 and circa 1825

Architect:

Builders: Jacob Merritt and wife Thomasine (original owners) 1785, with eastward addition by his son Abraham Merritt

Present Condition: Original, well maintained. Pent roof of older unit replaced in part by modern front porch. Modern frame one story addition at rear. Elaborately panelled mantel pieces and glass-paned large corner cupboard

Number of Stories: Two and one-half, over cellar

Materials of Construction:

Foundation - stone masonry up to cellar window head and brick up to molded brick water table

Exterior walls - flemish bond brickwork in older unit, English bond in later one

Interior walls - brick partywall and frame partitions

Chimneys - brick, built into inside of gable end walls

Roof - gable, wood shingled, wood cornices

Historical Data:

The identification of the man and wife for whom this house was erected in 1785, as indicated by their initials I. T. M. and those date figures all worked in brick below the cornice of the west gable

\*On road from Arney's Mount to Chambers Corners

end, appears as above stated, being the result of search of title to the property as recorded in the County archives and earlier in those of the Province of West New Jersey. That this brick house was erected as a successor to an earlier one, possibly on the same stone foundations, is apparent from the two small stones inscribed A. M. and S. M. and found reset in the apex of the west end gable. The names of the persons of these initials are likewise discovered in the search of title.

Thus, by his will of 5 October 1759, proved 7 September 1761, Abraham Mariott of Springfield Township, Burlington County, devised: "My Home Plantation, whereon I now dwell," with land bought of Stephen Gaskill and part of Ezekiel Eldridge, "unto my son Jacob, and immediately after the marriage or decease of his mother, which of them shall first happen". To his son Abraham he devised the farm whereon the son lived, to his wife a bed and a horse, and the remainder of his personal estate to her and their eight children, a daughter Sarah being a minor. A cedar swamp was devised to the son Isaac, who with the wife Sarah were appointed executors.

Their accounting of the estate, dated 12 November 1762, names the heirs as John Fort Sr., John Brasonton, Aaron Gaskill, John Acrit, and Henry Leshman, each in right of his wife, and Abraham, Jacob, Sarah and Isaac "Meritt". (a) Administration upon the estate of Sarah "Merrit" of Springfield Township, Burlington County, deceased intestate, widow of Abraham, was granted to (her son) Jacob Merrit of same place on 17 March 1768. (a)

Previously by deed of 4 January 1721, this testator Abraham Meriot or Marriot, of Springfield Township, had purchased from Thomas Shinn of same place, for 90 Pounds, a tract of 150 acres there, part of 350 which the latter had bought of Jennie Stewart, also of Springfield, and her son John Stewart, by deed of 7 September 1720. (b)

(a) Abstract of Will published in N. J. archives XXXIII, 271 and 283.

(b) Deed Book A-M, p. 309 and DD, p. 76, now deposited in Office of Secretary of State.

Jacob Marriott\*, or Merritt as the surname appears subsequently spelled, the son and devisee of the paternal homestead in 1759 as above stated, built thereon in 1785 the dated unit of the house here surveyed. He died intestate in 1816, and accordingly his real estate descended to his children.

By deed of 8 January 1817, the two daughters Sarah, with her husband Edward Taylor of Upper Freehold Township, Monmouth County, and Thomasine with her husband Thomas N. Howard, and their brother Abraham Merritt of Springfield Township, Burlington County, divided the "divers Plantations, tracts and parcels of land" of their late father, Jacob Merritt deceased, in the latter place. By this conveyance the son Abraham received two tracts of land, the 150 acre one of which is described as being the same "which Thomas Shinn conveyed to Abraham Merritt by deed dated 4 January 1721," cited above, being the tract on which stands the house here considered.

Having thus come into possession of his father's homestead, this Abraham Merritt 2nd held and occupied the same at the date of his will, 28 December 1841, in which he devised to his son Jacob Merritt the "Farm and Plantation where I now live, situated in the Township of Springfield, containing about 157 acres". He died before 7 April 1842, the date of probate. The second unit of the house, forming the eastern half, was evidently erected during the lifetime of this owner, Abraham Merritt 2nd. (c)

From his son and devisee Jacob Merritt, the house passed by will dated 22 June 1892 as part of the residue of his real estate devised to his

(c) Abraham Merritt, son of Jacob and Tamson, and Rebecca Lamb, daughter of Jacob and Elizabeth, were married 31 January 1802, per records of Burlington County Clerk.

\* Jacob Marriott was granted certificate to Evesham Monthly Meeting 1st of 10 mo. 1764. Thomasine, wife of Jacob Marriott, was received on certificate from Evesham Mo. Mtg. 5th of 3 mo. 1765. (minutes of Burlington Mo. Mtg. of Religious Society of Friends, publ. in Hinshaw's Encycl. American Quaker Genealogy, II, 241.)

daughter Rachel S. wife of William G. Lippincott Jr. of Mt. Holly, and they conveyed it with some 137 acres by deed of 25 March 1919 to Benajah W. Paul of Springfield Township, for \$13,000. In that conveyance the premises are described as "known as the Jacob Merritt Farm, "situated on the northeast side of the Mount Road. Mr. Paul remained as owner and occupant of the house at the time of our survey thereof in 1940.

Reference:

Search of title in land and probate records of Burlington County by Oscar F. Benjamin, H.A.B.S. research editor, reported 14 February 1940

*Lewis D. Cook*

Supervising Historian 21 July 1940

Approved:

*Seymour Williams*

SEYMOUR WILLIAMS, F.A.I.A.  
District Officer